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Another Harriman Mission

He Gets Carte Blanche From LBJ In Tackling Paris Job

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By Drew Pearson and Jack Anderson

AVERELL Harriman has undertaken a good many delicate diplomatic missions for a good many Presidents. Whenever he has taken a trip for President Johnson, LBJ has told him: "You know how to do it. Go ahead and do it your way."

These are more or less Ambassador Harriman's instructions as he undertakes the very difficult truce talks with North Vietnam. He knows what the President wants, and it will be up to him to decide on the tactics and the means of reaching that goal—peace.

Ambassador Harriman has held more jobs than any other man in Government today and has probably rubbed shoulders with more diverse people than anyone else, from the late Franklin D. Roosevelt to Jacqueline Kennedy to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

He started his Government career as part of the New Deal's NRA, then served as an adviser to Harry Hopkins, who in turn was the intimate confidant of Franklin Roosevelt; then became Ambassador to Great Britain, Ambassador to Russia, Ambassador for the administration of the Marshall Plan, Secretary of Commerce, Governor of New York, and finally, under Kennedy, became Deputy Under Secretary of State.

AFTER John F. Kennedy entered the White House, Harriman was made Deputy Under Secretary of State with undefined duties. Kennedy thought he ought to have some kind of a job but didn't know what he should do. Harriman became sort of a fifth wheel.

Finally he was given the toughest diplomatic job facing the Administration—negotiating an agreement with the Soviet Union over Laos. The United States, under the Dulles brothers in the Eisenhower Administration, had muddled up the Laotian situation to a point where it was near chaos.

Allen Dulles then in 1954 replaced Prince Souvanna Phouma, replacing him with strong man Phoumi Nosavan only to find

that the CIA's man could not run the country.

Finally Harriman, given the tough job of making Laos viable, restored Prince Souvanna Phouma—with the blessing of the Russians—and the Prince has been doing a good job ever since.

He has actually let American planes bomb parts of Laos in order to stop North Vietnam from shipping men and supplies through Laotian territory.

THE SECRET of Harriman's success, in part, was winning the confidence of Premier Khrushchev, whom he had known in Moscow some years before.

Later Kennedy put Harriman in charge of the Test Ban Treaty negotiations, where he did a masterful job of signing, along with Khrushchev, one of the most important treaties of this decade, banning all except underground nuclear tests.

Harriman has been giving careful thought to his present assignment. In preparation for the truce talks with the North Vietnamese, Harriman has studied what happened in North Korea.

The Korean truce talks were drawn out for two years

—chiefly because of two factors. One was the fact that Truman did not want to force the Communist prisoners to go home because he knew what happened to the Russian prisoners when they were returned.

Some of them jumped over the side of the ship rather than go home. He was afraid Communist prisoners would be tortured or executed on their return.

The other delaying factor was that the American military did not want to follow the 38th Parallel as the boundary between North and South Korea. They occupied some mountains a little to the north of the 38th Parallel, and wanted to keep it as easier to defend.

The haggling over these two points lasted two years.

This time, however, the situation is less complicated. The United States now has about 8000 North Vietnamese prisoners, and North Vietnam has only about 300 American pilots.

Thus an exchange should be fairly simple. Nevertheless, Harriman is reconciled to long drawn-out talks in Paris before he finally achieves peace.

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